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periodicity. Dr. Clarke evidently thinks well of a *mens sana* in a *corpus sanum*, and every one will allow that there are certain advantages in the combination. Periodicity is a part of the machinery and needs attention. So much may be freely conceded.

The book also contains a mother's sad story of a daughter, who, had she lived even under other influences, might very likely have been an invalid, but who, as it was, succumbed to a combination of protracted school-confinement, unoxxygenated air, and intellectual strain during many years, a victim to our pernicious system of mental education and physical culture acting upon a delicate organization. That her schoolmates and generation survived her is no proof to the contrary.

A second part of the book contains opinions and letters from teachers and others, corroborating Dr. Clarke's views, chiefly concerning periodicity. At the end is the interesting and valuable letter already alluded to, in which the English, comparatively open-air system of educating girls, especially their physique, is forcibly contrasted with our miserable hot-house stimulus and culture.

So far as Dr. Clarke's special argument is concerned, the conclusion to be drawn from the criticisms above suggested may be very briefly stated : 1. Our system of educating girls is bad. This has long been known. It bears injuriously on any weak points in mind or body ; and among the latter, the function of periodicity in certain individuals may be one. And, 2. This function, *in health*, does not particularly disable a woman from active duties, mental or physical.

4. — *The Prophet. A Tragedy.* By BAYARD TAYLOR. Boston : James R. Osgood & Co. 1874.

MR. BAYARD TAYLOR presents us with another example of his versatility. He has written a great deal of almost everything, but we are not aware that he had hitherto produced a tragedy. The present one is in blank verse, in five acts, and fills a considerable volume. There is a great deal of talk about American art, the American novel, and the American drama, but as a general thing we are treated, in the matter, to vastly more precept than example. Mr. Taylor, however, whose large acquaintance with foreign lands might have given him an excuse for evading the problem, has taken the bull by the horns and attempted to fling a veil of romance over an episode intensely characteristic of our local conditions of life. He has written the tragedy of Mormonism, and taken Joe Smith and Brigham Young for his heroes.

His experiment has not, to our taste, been remarkably successful, but it is creditable to his intellectual pluck. If he had succeeded, he would have achieved an extraordinary feat ; but it must be confessed that, though we should certainly have boasted of his performance, we would not perhaps have admitted that he had attempted it at his peril. Of course Mr. Taylor has had in a measure to adapt his material to poetic conditions. He has changed the names of his personages, elaborated his plot, left certain details gracefully vague, and, for the most part, steered clear of local color. But his desire has evidently been to adhere to reality as much as was practically convenient and to enjoy whatever benefit there might be in leaving to his drama the savor of the soil.

His idea was decidedly a tempting one, for he had the great advantage of finding a really massive subject ready made to his hands. New religions are tolerably common in our age and country, and, as things stand, they impress the imagination hardly more than the usual objects of registration in the Patent Office ; yet it remains true that a revelation which events have handsomely justified is a rather solidier theme for the dramatist than he often encounters, in this day of microscopic literature. We believe greatly, for our own part, in the importance of the subject ; a large one, to our mind, promises more than a small one, and when a poet has secured for a hero a veritable prophet, with the bloom not yet rubbed off by literature, he has our heartiest congratulations. It perturbs our faith a little to learn that the prophet is Mr. Joe Smith, and the *dénouement* is to be the founding of Salt Lake City by Mr. Brigham Young ; we reflect that there is a magic in associations, and we are afraid we scent vulgarity in these. But we are anxious to see what the author makes of them, and we grant that the presumption is in favor of his audacity. Mormonism we know to be a humbug and a rather nasty one. It needs at this time of day no "showing up," and Mr. Taylor has not wasted his time in making a poetical exposure. He assumes that the creed was founded in tolerable good faith, and he limits his view to its early stages, which already, at Western rates of progression, have faded into the twilight of tradition. His design has been to show how a religion springs into being, and how an honest man may be beguiled into thinking himself a prophet. He must of course be naturally of a rather attitudinizing turn, fond of brooding and spouting and riding a theological hobby. He must be half sincere and half shrewd, — sincere enough to desire his aim greatly, and shrewd enough to catch any capful of wind that may offer to swell his sails. He must make a figure in his neighborhood, and pass among his friends for a very re-

markable young man, — a young man with more in him than simple folks can exactly give a name to. But folks about him must be remarkably simple, and the great point apparently is that his friends should be uncommonly well disposed. Mr. Taylor's idea is that, if this is the case, the prophet expands to his full proportions by a process that one may call *reaction*. A certain temperament must be postulated and a certain *milieu* conceded ; after this the unfolding is logical. David Starr, Mr. Taylor's hero, would hardly have become a full-blown hierarch if his early lot had been cast in Boston or New York, unless indeed he had had the courage of his opinions in a greater degree than Mr. Taylor represents. His honors are forced upon him by the importunate credulity of his companions, and opportunity becomes so tempting as to resolve itself into a kind of law. He is not simply persuaded to pretend, he is persuaded, himself, to believe : first, as it were, to see how it feels ; then, on finding that it feels very comfortable, because retreat is awkward and the fascination irresistible. All this implies a good deal of complexity of character, for there are prophets and prophets. Mr. Taylor's is neither a fierce monomaniac nor a clever charlatan, but a mysterious mixture of the two. The author's intention here, and, indeed, throughout the book, has a great deal of psychological subtlety, though unfortunately it is rather unskillfully served by his execution. He has chosen a theme which belongs to the province of Mr. Browning, and to which Mr. Browning alone of living writers could have rendered minute justice. This, however, is but half Mr. Taylor's idea ; the remainder is equally analytic. David Starr is at once an impostor and a dupe, at once hammer and anvil ; and after dealing various blows for his own ends, he receives several crushing ones for others. In Nimrod Kraft, the high-priest of David's undefined creed, Mr. Taylor represents the profane and worldly element which rarely fails to cling to the skirts of a great enthusiasm, and get what is vulgarly called a lift on its own journey. Nimrod is a shrewd politician and a more powerful engine in the long run than David, whom he " works," as it were, deliberately and scientifically, as he would a vein of metal. David's revelation, which has acquired, with mysterious facility it must be confessed, a great following, is maliciously led into aggression and sedition, and incurs the displeasure of a certain Colonel Hyde, sheriff of the county, who, after various animadversions, shoots the prophet and breaks into the temple. There is a general scramble, in the midst of which Nimrod Kraft snatches the ark from the altar and rushes off to become the theocratic millionaire of Salt Lake City. Upon this the curtain descends, for Mr. Taylor is right in suspecting that even the hungri-

est appetite for "national" subjects would find a poetization of that enterprise a rather tough morsel to swallow. This is the rough outline of a story which Mr. Taylor has been careful to supply with a due proportion of detail; but it is true of the details as of the outline, that they are better in idea than in the use he makes of them. The prophet has a wife who has loved and trusted him in the days of his obscurity, and who, loving him still, is sadly puzzled to adapt her faith to his new pretensions. This figure of Rhoda is the best in the drama, and the poor woman's situation is certainly pathetic: her mingled devotion and bewilderment, her vague sense of something evil in the whole matter, the purity of her own instincts, and her final submission to polygamy. Mr. Taylor has not balked at the peculiar institution of Mormonism; he has only tried to explain it rationally, as he, after a fashion, explains the other steps in the scheme. How far his explanation tallies with traditional fact we are unable to say; but it helps along the drama, which is decidedly in need of it. A certain Livia Romney, a so-called "woman of the world," makes her appearance, becomes the Egeria of the new Pompilius, and, with a certain grotesque analogy with the abbreviated fox who wished his comrades to put him in the fashion by the sacrifice of their tails, brings about the plurality of wives in order to legitimate her own connection. Livia is not as good as Rhoda; but Mr. Taylor is right in feeling that the imagination demands that the prophet shall have some ardent female associate. It is a happy conception of the author that Rhoda, with a woman's characteristic preference of the near kindness to the remote, has ministered to the delusion she deprecates. The best passage in the volume is the one in which her husband learns from her that if it was an angel who supplied him with food when he had gone forth to fast in the wilderness, it was a strictly human angel.

When morning came,
And lapped in faint indifference to life
I lay, the barren rock before mine eyes
Was as a table, spread by angel hands!
He gave me food; I ate and I was saved.
As well refuse the food he offers now,
And let faith, starving, die!

RHODA, *eagerly*.

Who saved you then
May save again! 'Tis naught to offer food;
But I obeyed a voice this moment clear,
And charged, I feel, with all the Lord's high will

In woman manifest. I pray you, take,
Even from my hands which then were hid from you,
Now, openly, my evidence from Him !

DAVID.

What double sense is in your words ? I hear,
Not comprehending.

RHODA.

How could I refrain ?
Two days had passed : I dared not interrupt
Your solitude of soul, and prayers that fed
Upon the life of your forgotten frame ;
But, guided near you, O, thank Him for that !
I left the food.

DAVID.

You ? You ?

RHODA.

As was His will.
What ails you, David ?

(*Aside.*)

He is deadly pale ;
There's something fierce and strange within his eyes :
He frightens me.

DAVID.

You brought me food ?

RHODA.

I did.

DAVID.

What else ? What more have you in secret done ?
Who taught you so to counterfeit the Lord ?
Woman ! To burrow underneath my feet,
And make a hollowness where rock should be !
How dared you cheat me ?

RHODA.

Slay me with your hand,
Not with such face and words. If I but saved
(You say it saved you), how could love refrain ?
I have obeyed, believed all else in you,
As I believe and worship still : forgive !

(*She falls on her knees before him.*)

DAVID.

Nct unto me, your husband, David, man ;
But if I be a prophet of the Lord,
Yes, *if* ! It seems to you a little thing :
Rise up : I cannot answer now : the house

Rocks to and fro, the temple's pinnacles
 Dance in the air like devil's shuttlecocks :
 There 's nothing stable. Rise, I say again !

(*She rises to her feet.*)

Now take your seat and sew. I've heard it said
 Women think better when the hand 's employed.
 If 't is so, think.

(*He moves toward the door.*)

RHODA.

David !

DAVID.

I go to pray.

RHODA.

Come back ! He 's gone. O God, what have I done ?

These lines represent Mr. Taylor at his best, and we are unable to gainsay the reader's inference that a work in which they are strikingly prominent is, as a general thing, rather wanting in relief. Mr. Taylor writes with such extreme good-will, and gives so little positive offence, that it seems ungrateful to criticise him ; but it is impossible to deny that "The Prophet" does not take hold of the imagination. It is the reverse of vulgar in conception, it is careful in execution, it has a dozen commendable qualities, and we have seen better books which in some respects might take example by it. But it wants style, it lacks heat, it misses the nameless something which Sir Joshua Reynolds, in the anecdote, indicated by a snap of his fingers. The people are shadows, and the whole manner is prosaic. This is partly because of a want of warmth in the author's imagination, but partly also, we think, because a defect inherent in his plan makes it impossible (and would still make it impossible in other circumstances) that the reader's own imagination should kindle. If his book has no atmosphere, the fault is not only Mr. Taylor's but his subject's. It is very well to wish to poetize common things, but here as much as ever, more than ever, one must choose. There are things inherently vulgar, things to which no varnish will give a gloss, and on which the fancy consents only grudgingly to rest her eyes. Mormonism is one of these ; an attempt to import Joseph Smith into romance, even very much diluted and arranged, must in the nature of things fall flat. The reason why is the reason the rhymist did n't like Doctor Fell. His associations are fatal to him and to all his companions. Mr. Taylor's Livia Romney is a capital example of this. He bravely sets her down in the *dramatis personæ* as a "woman of

the world," but we see her in our mind's eye, we hear her accent, we know her phraseology, and we guess in what "world" she flourished. There would be much to say on this matter of vulgarity and distinction; and if Mr. Taylor's volume lacks the prime requisites of success, it may at least be called a suggestive failure.

5. — *A Historical Sketch of the Discovery of America by the Norsemen in the Tenth Century.* By R. B. ANDERSON, A. M., of the University of Wisconsin. Chicago: S. C. Griggs & Co. 1874.

THIS is the last American contribution to the mooted question of Norse discovery in this country. The subject is one which offers an excellent opportunity for suggestive argument, and careful investigation might possibly reveal new and valuable facts. This work gives neither the one nor the other. The first chapter points out the various races of man who should be interested in Norse discoveries. In a prefatory manner it is remarked that "the author will not be surprised, if, in these pages, he should happen to throw out some thoughts which will conflict with the reader's previously formed convictions about matters and things generally, and about historical facts especially." To this statement no exception can be taken. The author's conflict with historical facts is at times surprising. On matters and things generally he is less surprising, but far more amusing. To take from the first paragraph an example of the author's method of dealing with matters and things generally: "The American student loves to gaze upon the pages of American history." Whatever the case may be in the enlightened West, in this more benighted part of the country it is to be feared that the average American student does little more than "gaze" upon the pages of his country's history. It is very gratifying to feel that in the younger States the American student's "whole soul is filled with transporting emotions of delight or sympathy," as he reads the history of the Revolution.

The brief sentences already quoted indicate the high-toned style in which this book is written. It would be unfair, however, if some of the more striking passages were not quoted. Limited space forbids that extracts long enough to do full justice to the splendor of the statements should be made, but the following will give a faint idea of the character of the book.

In appealing to American interest in his subject the author says: "For those who are born and brought up on the fertile soil of Columbia, under the shady branches of the noble tree of American liberty,